



SOUTHEAST NEWS

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SEC honors its Laywomen!

In order to make visible the many and varied contributions that have been made by UCC Lay Women, the SEC, at the June Annual Meeting, honored Erna Bryant, Trudy Braun and Lois Harry for 1993. These three attended the General Synod 19, as the guests of the Coordinating Center for Women at a gala banquet. All women who have served the church through works similar to these are represented and reflected in the lives of these women. Erna Bryant, Southeast Conference Moderator and member of Central Congregational United Church of Christ in Atlanta, GA, served as Chair of Visions '91; wrote the first Affirmative Action guidelines for the State Department of Education, Commonwealth of Massachusetts; is the first and only African American female candidate for State Treasurer; was the only black female admitted to the Adm. Career Doctoral Program at Harvard Graduate School of Education; and has worked tirelessly in many programs against discrimination and for education. In addition to serving as Moderator of the SEC, Erna serves on the Church and Ministry Committee, the National Ecumenical Partnership Committee; Conferences of the UCC Insurance Advisory Board; Church Women United of Georgia; Trustee Board, Central Congregational Church; Vice Chair for Program and Coordinator—Partners for Live Cancer Screening Program. The list of former activities and honors is long and impressive which comes as no surprise to those who know and love her.

Trudy Braun, Public Health Nurse Educator and member of United Christian Church in Crossville, TN, exemplifies all the qualities ascribed to an Honored Lay Woman. She has served on the Visions '91 Committee; served the National Church as a medical missionary for over 20 years in Ghana, Africa; and is an active leader in all areas of her church. Her witness extends into the community as she strives to address concerns of teenage pregnancy and sex education in this region. Trudy currently serves on the Board of Rural Cumberland Resources; Registered Tennessee Nurses Association Board; Children in Council; Chair of the Mental Health Association, and Committee of Children and Youth. Trudy maintains a ministry of hospitality in her home and is truly a sensitive and compassionate servant of her brothers and sisters.

Lois Harry, currently Chair of the East Alabama/West Georgia Witness Committee and Projects Committee; Chair of Altar Guild; member of Choir and of Historical Committee; and served three years on the Women's Commission of the

Southeast Conference. She is a member of Chattahoochee Hospice and Alabama/Georgia Hospital Auxiliary as Volunteer Surgical Liaison. Beginning in her teen years, Lois was active in SEC Church life. She attended the National Youth Convention in 1938; has served as Sunday School teacher; Adult Leader at Senior High Camp at Southern Union College; served several times as President of Alabama/NW Florida Women's Fellowship; member of National Race Relations Committee held in New York and Ohio; and led at regional meeting in North Carolina; served as secretary to the SEC for a number of years; has held most every office in East Alabama/West Georgia Women's Fellowship and was President twice of Church Women United locally. In the community, Lois helped with organization of Interfaith Food Closet serving Chambers County, AL and West Point, GA, heading the 8th Anniversary celebration this year. She is descended from a long line of ministers in our denomination. It is said, "and she does everything with love and care ... and humor!"

Join us in celebrating the lives of these women!

Roots of Heritage, Wings of Hope

"... But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles." [Isaiah 40:31, NIV]

Rev. Norman W. Jackson entertained, informed and inspired delegates and visitors at Southeast Conference '93 in Talladega, Alabama. Drawing upon his Seneca Indian heritage, "Jack" reminded his audience that conflict is created when we stop listening to each other.

Other speakers during the conference included Joseph Johnson, President of Talladega College; Erna Bryant, Moderator; John Lackey; Henry Tuttle; Earl Murray; John Buck; David Beebe; Robert Johnson; and Roger Knight, Conference Minister. Honored Lay Women were introduced by Rev. Joyce Myers-Brown.

Resolutions "Shalom in Cuba" and "Rights of Local Churches" both passed after lengthy discussion and minor word changes.

The "Festival of Talents of SEC" proved to be a highlight of the Conference. Those who stayed Saturday evening for this event were both moved to tears and provoked to laughter by the great diversity of talent scheduled (and unscheduled) to perform.

The one great emotional moment came with the announcement that Mrs. Lala Allen will be giving the SEC property suitable for a retreat/meeting center. The details are still being worked out.

The Make A Difference Campaign ... and beyond

Most of you know by now that the "Make A Difference" campaign is the big event of the moment in our UCC ... an endeavor to raise a minimum of \$30 million to bring us to full strength for responding to the awesome challenges (for good and ill!) with which the soon-to-dawn new century will surely confront us.

Do not think that this is just “one more campaign” to get your dollars. This is the kind of campaign that comes along but once in a lifetime. Here’s what the Campaign will do for us:

1. The Campaign will enable us to approach the new century with a fresh awareness of our mission. The first facet of the Campaign is mission study, for which excellent materials have been prepared. This study will set us about the task of re-thinking and redesigning mission for a new century. The material is designed as a six weeks’ course. You are urged to begin your mission study in September.
2. The Campaign will bring to full strength our clergy, our churches, our communities, and our Conference. The moneys raised will be directed toward carefully thought-through objectives in our four areas. By the way, half of the SEC Challenge Goal would come back to our Conference.
3. The Campaign, working through ten SEC cluster groups, provides for a more effective way of life together in the SEC after the Campaign is over. That is, the SEC Restructuring Committee has agreed to recommend that these ten clusters (with minor rearrangements) be continued after the Campaign as a means of overcoming our widespread geographical differences.

We CAN “make a difference!” How? By recognizing the UCC *Make A Difference Campaign* and placing it at the top of your priority list of church giving.

CONFERENCE COMMENTS:

Conference Minister’s Message

“... you have pain now: ... your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.”

Such unbelievably assuring words of Jesus to his close followers awaken us from the routines of business and boredom. We scarcely take time for those nurturing sources of joy, and to remember that joy is a distinct hallmark of Christian faith. Before the above words, Jesus has instructed about “the vine and branches” as a metaphor of living in Christ, concluding, “These things I have spoken to you that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete (full).” [John 15-16] We all know how elusive joy can be, that it can’t be manufactured or faked ... indeed, it is a gift of God’s Spirit! Anything less is pale or flat. Some scholars indicate joy is the distinct expression of Christ-like faith.

Yet, Henri Nouwen writes poignantly of this being a joyless age, and speaks of the shallowness, busyness, and the materialism, burdened and driven life we’ve gotten ourselves into. We have everything needed; we want for nothing; yet lacking the inner joy of self to be shared hospitably. Joy is expectancy. Faith says tomorrow is always because God is in charge and makes all things new. Joy is the gift of living openly for tomorrow because yesterday’s shadow of fear and death are powerless in Christ’s realized resurrection. Church life and history are about

people's lives being touched, redeemed or converted by God's grace with a joy that cannot be taken from them. Yet there are instances of persons and congregations squabbling perpetually, going nowhere, people about whom the theologian wrote, "I could believe in their Christ if his followers exhibited his joy a little more."

People of faith have also lifted their plea for that joy of the Lord. The psalmist's familiar words, "Restore (repeat) to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit," are a yearning for what is lost and an asking God for a basic life-pervading new outlook and spirit. This distinctive joy in Christian faith, say scholars, grows out of suffering, not as an avoidance of the pain and struggle. Yes, out of crucifixion, suffering and death has come God's new life, resurrection and joy for us. Isn't that the faith we re-affirm and look for as we worship weekly? I do. So may we have a song in our heart, rejoicing in God our Savior and sing "O be joyful in the Lord!" How is your heart today? Is that what you're seeking? There is joy that shall not be taken from you.

Joy in Christ be yours, friends.

Roger Knight

Do you have your Guidebook?

Local Church Leaders' Guidebook for Congregations of the Southeast Conference, UCC

Available for the first time at the SEC's June '93 Annual Meeting, the "Guidebook" was developed and presented by the Church and Ministry Commission, SEC, UCC, to assist church leaders in "building up the body of Christ" as informed and therefore, clearly committed communities of faith.

Included are an example of a mission statement; a history of the UCC and how it is organized; the makeup of the SEC; a sample "Commissioning Service Order;" explanations of various church bodies and their responsibilities; "What to do When There is no Pastor;" and a brief outline of Parliamentary Procedure ... it's all there.

Each and every church in the SEC should have at least one copy of this handy book. It is suggested that the officer of the church most suitable for the training of church leaders should oversee the use of the "Guidebook." If your church did not receive a copy, or if you need additional copies, contact the Conference office at 404/607-1993.

The Church and Ministry Commission welcomes comments from the ministers and official boards on how they will be using the "Guidebook."

Hunger Relief Action

On Wednesday, May 28, 1993, the Rev. Paul Sherry, President of the UCC, appeared and testified before the Department of Operations and Nutrition Subcommittee of the Agriculture Committee of the House of Representatives in

Washington, DC. Mr. Sherry's testimony was in support of H.R. 529, the Mickey Leland Childhood Hunger Relief Act.

Citing the involvement of 85% of the 6400 UCC congregations in providing needed services such as soup kitchens and food pantries, Mr. Sherry indicated that there is a grassroots willingness to help solve the problem of childhood hunger in this country. At the same time, Mr. Sherry spoke to the issue that church and social service agencies cannot take care of this country's 5 million children under the age of 12 who are hungry and the additional 6 million children who are in danger of hunger.

Mr. Sherry testified that, "The 18th General Synod of the United Church of Christ endorsed the Campaign to End Childhood Hunger in July 1991. That Campaign recognized the urgent need for increased governmental action. That Campaign recognizes the fact that food stamps continue to be the most effective program for alleviating hunger in this country. That Campaign calls for increases in food stamp benefits and helpful changes in the qualifying criteria. We support the Leland Act because it responds to that call."

Arranging for Mr. Sherry to testify was a cooperative effort between the UCC Office for Church in Society in Washington, DC and the UCC Hunger Action Office in Cleveland. Jenni Wierwille, OCIS intern, worked with Steven Nunn-Miller, director of Hunger Action, coordinating Mr. Sherry's schedule and testimony. Collaboration occurred with other Washington-based groups who are also working on hunger issues, as well.

Copies of Mr. Sherry's testimony are available through the UCC Hunger Action Office for all with on-going work against hunger and poverty. Additional information on the Campaign to End Childhood Hunger is also available from the Hunger Action Office.

CHURCH DEVELOPMENT NEWS:

Building and Expanding God's Presence and Work

Local church development within Southeast Conference borders is showing more and more signs of growing and innovative "grass roots" support. When we talk about the projects active at Chattanooga, Marietta-Amistad, Macon, Atlanta (Center Congregational, Rush Memorial, Carroll Heights), and Lilburn-Gwinnett Community, the focus shifts more away from the basic bare bones leadership subsidy monies contributed from Conference and Board for Homeland Ministries. While Leadership subsidy remains a substantial reliance for most, if not all of these projects, the good news is that "good neighbors" are showing up in various ways to help move things along toward real growth and independent mission/ministry identification in our church development situations.

Some examples: At the Chattanooga Sheares Memorial new church, the Umoja (Unity) appeal has so far drawn interest and support from a sister church and individuals as far away as New York. Closer by, the word and concept has inspired our own Conference artisan to new levels of creative effort resulting in a

gift of his own handmade solid oak pulpit and communion table set with carved lettering, to the new church pastor and congregation. Sig Orgler is in the process of doing the same thing for Amistad Fellowship gathering under Flora Wilson-Bridges meeting at Pilgrimage Church in Marietta. At Macon the complicated, long drawn out financial and real property matters would not have been resolved as well as they were without the literal donation of Lester Ariail's professional financier services over an extended time. Maureen Jenci-Shelton and Don Nelson are both serving the Center Congregational Church on Moores Mill Road, Atlanta, with very limited monetary compensation and without complaint. The congregation is very small, but the need and the promise for growth is great. Carroll Heights Church, Atlanta, is in the path of an expanding airport project that will most likely impact its future relocation. In the meantime, however, one of our East Alabama ministers has offered to bring youth from his area to Six Flags and have them spend some of their time there helping to clean up and fix up the proud old church building nearby. This offer, though still pending, has had the force of renewing faith and bringing hope to an aging small congregation.

These examples are not complete, but they can serve to remind us of who we are and what we can do to help and support one another in the high calling of building and expanding God's presence and work. South DeKalb new church proposal and project has now been approved. The Georgia-South Carolina Association is in the process of organizing and further planning for the success of this project. Gwinnett Community United Church of Christ Church is at another strategic point in its continued effort toward revision and renewal. All of this needs not only our attention, but also our prayerful and creative hands-on presence and support. Greet the new pastors at Chattanooga, Marietta, Atlanta, Belvidere, and elsewhere with your warmest embrace and assurance of your prayers and support. More and more this is what nourishes church development within the Southeast Conference.

Mitchell C. Johnson
Associate Conference Minister

OCWM RECEIPTS 2ND QUARTER—JUNE 30, 1993

Giving By Association	Second Quarter	1993 To Date
Alabama-Tennessee	21,008.16	39,004.36
Georgia-South Carolina	13,536.66	24,291.79
East Alabama-West Georgia	2,455.00	3,180.00
South Alabama-Northwest Florida	895.00	1,105.00

Officers elected at Annual Meeting

The following persons were elected to offices, commissions and committees by the Annual Meeting:

Secretary, Dr. Miller Jordan (First Church, Atlanta, GA); *Treasurer*, H. Lester Ariail (Macon, GA); *Board of Directors, Members at Large*, Melinda Davis (First Church, Montgomery, AL) and Essie Holman (First Church, Atlanta); *Association Representatives*: Holly Nelson (Howard Church, Nashville, TN); Bill Tweed (United Church, LaGrange, GA), Florence Miller (Plymouth Church, Charleston, SC) and James Courtney (Good Hope Church, Baker, FL).

Church & Ministry Commission: Donald Nelson (Atlanta, GA); *Stewardship/OCWM Commission*: Ernie Simon (Community Church, Pleasant Hill, TN) and Jacqueline Grimes (Montgomery, AL); *Church Development and Evangelism Committee*: Patti Talley (United Church, LaGrange, GA); *Women's Commission*: Virada Brand (First Church, Andalusia, AL); *Social Justice Commission*: Gary Woodruff (Central Church, Atlanta, GA); *Heritage Committee*: Idella Childs (First Church, Marion, AL) and Stacey Moore (Montgomery, AL).

Structure Task Force at work

A Task Force on Structure was appointed by Moderator Dr. Erna Bryant to articulate goals for the organization, program and staff in order to mobilize and guide the Conference into new directions. This issue of the long distances between churches has been a major concern for some time.

Persons representing associations, the Board of Directors, churches and pastors met July 9th and 10th at the Conference Office with Rev. Dr. Robert P. Noble from the Board for Homeland Ministries, who served as the facilitator.

Consensus as developed around the following:

It was agreed that the Conference would build on the base of the "Cluster" concept presently in place for the "Make A Difference!" campaign, including its geographical areas and leadership, where possible.

The Conference will explore the possibilities of working cooperatively with the Disciples of Christ in Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia and South Carolina with regard to program.

Leadership empowerment for nurture and growth for the next generation will be a focus for churches/congregations.

Annual Meetings will be continued with a clarity of purpose communicated by their agenda and design. The Conference will explore the use of new technologies with the national office for shared specialty staffing, training and business management at the regional level.

UPCOMING

Coming Events in the Southeast Conference

Aug. 1-7, 1993:	Iowa/SEC Youth Leadership Training Camp
Aug 13-15, 1993;	Youth Event at Langdale, AL

Sep. 22-30, 1993:	Larry Rezash – Pension Board – will be traveling throughout the SEC, to explain programs of the Pension Board
Sep. 24 & 25, 1993	Board of Directors, SEC
Oct. 8-10, 1993	Southern Region Women's Retreat – Biloxi, MS
Nov. 12-13, 1993	SEC Planning Event – for all commissions and program bodies to plan programs, in coordinated and focused manner for 1994. Place to be announced.
April 18-20, 1994	Clergy/Spouse Retreat, Blowing Rock, NC

ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

Sep. 10-11, 1993	AL/TN Association – Trinity Congregational, Athens, AL
Sep. 17-18, 1993	GA/SC Association – Pilgrimage UCC, Marietta, GA
Oct. 2, 1993	S AL/NW FL Association
Oct. 16, 1993	E AL Association

GEORGIA-SOUTH CAROLINA ASSOCIATION: *To Meet in Annual Conference*

On September 17 and 18, the Georgia-South Carolina Association, UCC will hold its 24th Annual Meeting at Pilgrimage UCC in Marietta, Georgia. The Planning Group has been working diligently to make this year's event extra special. The theme of the meeting is "Partners in Ministry: Laity and Clergy." Two outstanding speakers have agreed to give us their thoughts on this topic.

Ms. Bernice Powell Jackson, Executive Associate to the President, UCC, will initiate the discussion at the opening worship service on Friday evening. The Rev. Dr. Thomas Dipko, our keynote speaker, will continue the discussion of our theme on Saturday morning.

Together with these two remarkable guests, the Planning Group has arranged for an extensive musical program, a special "Awards and Recognitions" service, and a fun and flavorful "down home" shrimp boil to be hosted by Back Bay Mission to conclude the meeting. Mark these dates, Sept. 17-18, on your calendar and plan to be with us in Marietta! The registration deadline is August 25th and the registration fee is \$25 per person.

Conference Youth Council Formed

Formed and approved at the SEC Conference was a regular program body of youth and adults, co-opted onto the Board of Directors. The Council will be planning youth events and gatherings for youth throughout the year. At the SEC Conference Annual Meeting, the following youth were commissioned as Youth Council members: Heidi Niefert of Birmingham Pilgrim; Anna Sales of Marietta

Pilgrimage; Dzauya Nkuchwayo of Atlanta Central; and Reshida Johnson of Birmingham First; along with Lisa Hahn of Atlanta and Charlotte and Alvin Harnsberry of Birmingham as Adult Advisors. The Saturday offering established a program fund for the Youth Council in the Conference Budget. Other adult leaders who will be working on Youth activities include: Toni and Gina Smith of Langdale, Renae Koehler of Birmingham, Nancy Barnes of Chattanooga, and the Ensminger Intern(s) of Fisk University. If your church has questions or suggestions, or desires assistance in the Youth programming, or information about activities and resources, contact the Conference Office and it will be relayed to the Youth Council. Of course, you may contact them directly.

Sabbatical

The Conference Minister will be on Sabbatical beginning August 1st for three months. Mitchell Johnson, Associate Conference Minister, will assume his duties.

Pleasant Hill Community Church Honors Robert McKinley

Bob McKinley, for his lifetime devotion to Boy Scouting and to service to his community, was honored during the worship service on May 2nd with a plaque that reads, "Devoted to the Scouts of Troop 170, generous of time and expertise for their training and advancement, a model of responsible leadership and service to youth."

Retreat Center

As a committee, we met at Pleasant Grove with much excitement and joy over the prospects of a Retreat Center for the Southeast Conference. We want you to feel this same anticipation as members of the UCC in SEC. Please affirm the concept with your prayers and support. As you have ideas and feelings related to the project, what a Conference Center may be or do, please share them with us. We will keep the SEC informed on the progress of our committee. Richard Chamberlain from the National Staff of the UCC, whose responsibility is in the area of camps and conference, will meet with us October 25-26.

Rev. Floyd Carmack, Chair

For Your Information ...

COMMISSION ON CHURCH IN SOCIETY:

contact: Rev. Dorothy Gager, Chair, Nashville, TN

COMMISSION ON WOMEN IN CHURCH & SOCIETY

contact: Rev. Joyce Myers-Brown, Chair, Atlanta, GA

Church Profile ...

United Congregational Christian Church

623 Juniper Street, LaGrange, GA 30240

United in love on August 16, 1931, the First Christian Church and the First Congregational Church met for the first time as the United Church on October 1931. Both churches had been organized in the early part of the century: First Christian, in 1900, and First Congregational, in 1909. Both churches had their beginnings in tents until suitable buildings could be found. Some early ministers were: Rev. Emory Carter, Rev. Hilliard Elder, Rev. Jim Young, Mr. John Tatum, Rev. Charles W. Hanson, Rev. Richard A. McKay, Rev. Thomas Hughey, Rev. J. T. Farr, Dr. Charles Baldwin, Dr. A. T. Osborne, Rev. Clifford C. Hamilton, Rev. Jesse Dollar, Rev. John H. Knight, Rev. David W. Shepherd, Rev. Melvin Dollar, Rev. Olin Sheppard, Rev. Henry Weaver, Rev. John Pickens and (more recently) Rev. Roy Bain. The present minister is Dr. David I. Naglee. United Church has a strong Men's Fellowship and Women's Missionary Society. The church recently voted to relocate to a more visible site as soon as a suitable location is found.

THE SOUTHEAST NEWS

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Vice Moderator, Richard Sales

Secretary, Miller Jordan

Treasurer, Lester Ariail

Alabama-Tennessee Association Moderator, James Smalley, Jr.

East Alabama-West Georgia Association Moderator, Bill Tweed

Georgia-South Carolina Association Moderator, Robert Johnson

South Alabama-Northwest Florida Association Moderator, Woody Clark

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This transcription was recorded on September 5, 6, and 7, 2013 by Mike Stroud, director of Project 66-16, an initiative to record, compile and write the history of the Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ.

